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Takishira, Baron Kogoro.

Address... at the fourth of
July celebration held in
Independence Hall at Philadelphia
July 5, 1909.



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ADDRESS OF

Baron Kogoro Takahira

AT THE

Fourth of July Celebration

Held in Independence Hall

AT PHILADELPHIA

JULY 5, 1909



With the author's compliments.

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ADDRESS OF BARON KOGORO TAKAHIRA AT
THE FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION, HELD
IN INDEPENDENCE HALL AT PHILADELPHIA,
JULY 5, 1909

Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen:

One hundred and thirty-three years ago on the Fourth of July, your forefathers, representing the thirteen colonies of which this country was then composed, assembled in this memorable hall, and, inspired by their ardent love of liberty for which these colonies had been struggling for many successive years, declared the independence of the United States of America. It was indeed a most solemn occasion when the life of this great republic began as a nation. The men who had been hitherto insurgents were thereby made free men, and took to themselves the ideas and ideals not only to be observed as citizens but as a nation. Such ideas and ideals were the culmination of their extreme experiences which compelled them to throw into the game of war their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor—carrying with these ideals to all posterity the same spirit and force which gave utterance to them—as though the bell that rang to signal that great momentous event still echoes in the hearts of those standing under it today.

In the first lines of the Declaration of Independence it is said that all men are created equal. Equality is the guiding principle upon which this great nation was founded. All the States constituting it are regarded equal, and, therefore, free and independent, as are all the men composing them. The principle of equality conveys with it the idea of human perfectibility, as Tocqueville says, and the sense of individual responsibility, I may add. It was due to this reason that, al-

though the American army of the Revolutionary War was of such a small number, never reaching more than 38,000 regulars at one time, these men were always of the same mind, equally sharing the responsibility—firmly determined to fight the battle out—to stand or fall with the principles they had announced. They were ready for death and defeat, although resolved on life and victory for liberty. They called themselves no longer Virginians, Pennsylvanians, New Yorkers, or New Englanders, but Americans. They knew by uniting they could stand, but by dividing they must fall. They were united in the cause, and were, therefore, successful in attaining it.

The constitution which was adopted in this hall in 1787, was also framed on the foundation of the principle of equality, and all men are thereby treated equal in right and duty. If they were not equal in their station and employments they were encouraged on equal conditions with others to attain such station and to secure such employment as they may desire. They were as conscientious in duty as insistent upon rights. They were, therefore, brave in war, industrious in peace, faithful in public service, earnest in private calling. The peace and progress which has attended the national life of this great people since the day we are commemorating has been simply marvelous and surely unparalleled in the history of nations.

The great Civil War was undoubtedly disastrous to the advancement of industrial and commercial interests hitherto continued with wonderful rapidity, but it was, after all, nothing but the touchstone to test the quality of the national character and strength. Great men—President Lincoln and General Grant—appeared at once in the arena in response to the call of the times, and achieved what General Washington and Benjamin

Franklin did in the War of the Revolution. Disasters were, indeed, enormous, but recoveries were comparatively rapid, and today the nation, whose life began only 133 years ago, has become a mighty, solid, and enormous power, and the eyes of the world are more and more fixed upon her, as navigators look up to the luminous light of the pole star. Power is not, however, bestowed without responsibility, as right is always accompanied by duty. Great powers have great responsibilities. The welfare of mankind in general largely depends on their action.

As for Japan, she was not only introduced into the comity of nations through the agency of American diplomacy, but has always been encouraged by it in various ways as she advanced in her progressive movement, as if its intention were to apply the principle of equality the same to nations as to individuals, even when we were still in less modest position. The Centennial Exposition, which was held in this city in 1876, witnessed the superior quality of Japanese silk, and introduced it to the American market to build up the now comparatively enormous trade between the two countries by fostering our purchasing power and enabling us to acquire from America large quantities of goods we used to buy elsewhere. The United States also recognized Japan's tariff autonomy before any other power, in 1878, and was only second to Great Britain, our honored ally, in taking the initiative in 1894 to abolish her ex-territorial jurisdiction in Japan, which might be called our international emancipation. Thus strongly encouraged by the friendly action and attitude of the United States, Japan has been continually endeavoring to improve herself in politics and social conditions so as to make herself worthy of her position as a member of the community of civilized nations.

We have a constitution guaranteeing freedom of religious belief, liberty of speech, writing, publication, public meetings and associations. Freedom of conscience and progress of truth are of the most vital importance to man, and most peoples have struggled for them through dark and dismal paths until they have at last come out into the radiance of open day. In Japan, thanks to the wisdom of His Majesty, the Emperor, who was able, in consequence of the timely contact of his country with other nations, to learn early in life what they had experienced in these regards, we were granted the liberty and right which are guaranteed by the constitution, as I said before, thus opening up a great path of progress for the moral and intellectual development of our people.

This is not, however, all we want to do. We are using every effort in our power, however limited it may be, to help our neighboring countries to improve themselves and to enjoy the benefit of modern civilization. We shall, therefore, be happy to see the United States act toward them as she acted toward us. We want to see America always act up to American ideas and ideals, as we understand them, and extend to the neighbors of Japan the principles of liberty and equality when they are entitled to such treatment as a result of their improvement and modernization. Such action will prove not only beneficial, but encouraging to them. The peace and progress of mankind at large are today the duty and responsibility of the great powers.

Today under the American flag unfurled in the gentle breeze coming from the summit of Fujiyama, all the representative men of the government, as well as the people of Tokio, throng the American embassy in that city, to express their happy sentiments for your national birthday. I am only echoing their sentiment in addressing you thus on this most auspicious occasion.



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